



AGATHA CHRISTIE

AND  
THEN  
THERE WERE

THE  
WORLD'S  
BEST-SELLING  
MYSTERY  
STORY!

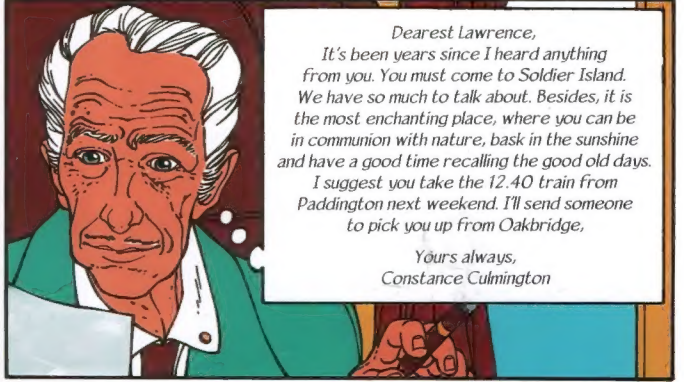
NONE

ADAPTED BY FRANÇOIS RIVIÈRE  
ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK LECLERCQ

1938



MR JUSTICE WARGRAVE



Dearest Lawrence,  
It's been years since I heard anything from you. You must come to Soldier Island. We have so much to talk about. Besides, it is the most enchanting place, where you can be in communion with nature, bask in the sunshine and have a good time recalling the good old days. I suggest you take the 12.40 train from Paddington next weekend. I'll send someone to pick you up from Oakbridge,  
Yours always,  
Constance Culmington



The mysterious Soldier Island... Lady Constance is true to her style.



VERA CLAYTHORNE

We'll be reaching Oakbridge in half an hour, Miss.

Thank you.

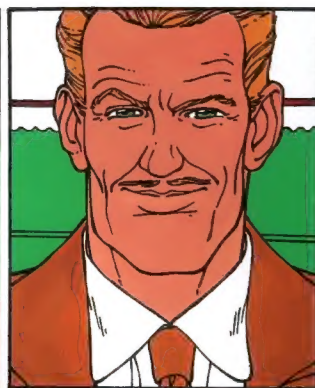


Ah! The letter from the agency...

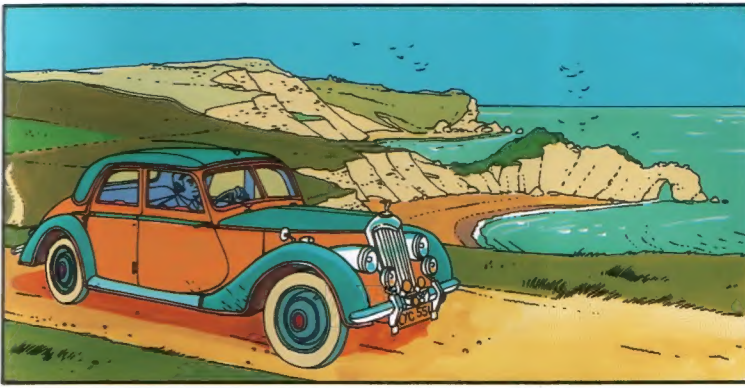


MISS VERA CLAYTHORNE  
33, HOLBORN ST.  
LONDON



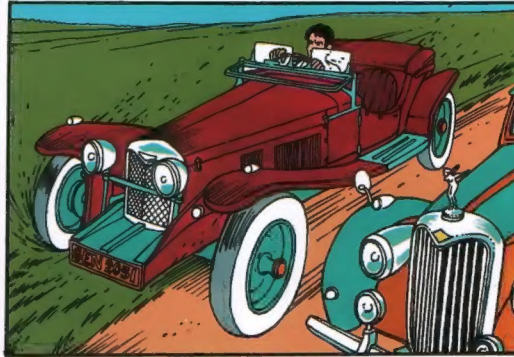
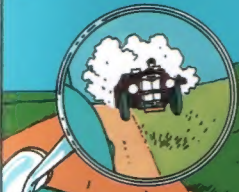






DOCTOR ARMSTRONG

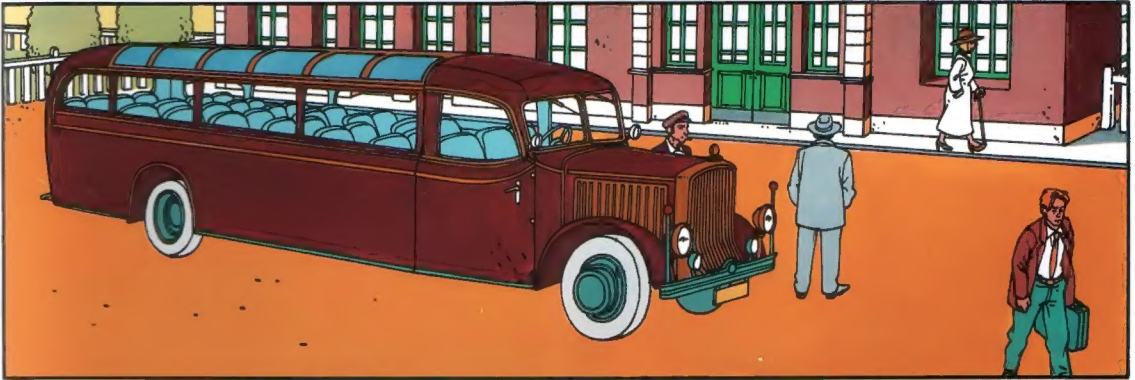
Good grief! This young fool  
will have me off the road!



At last! I hate slowcoaches  
blocking the road...



TONY MARSTON



Here you are, Mr Davis. You're going to  
Soldier Island, aren't you?

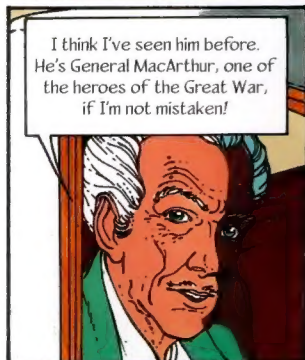
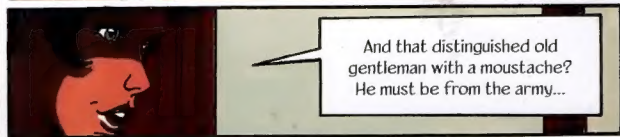
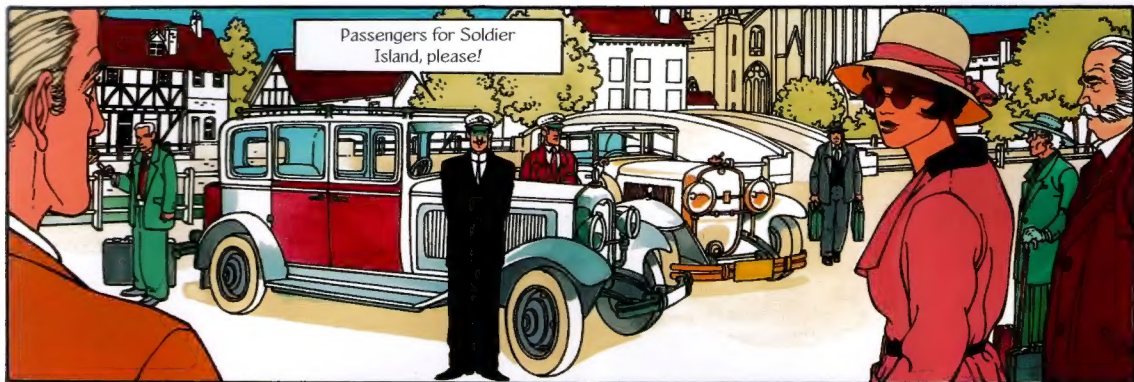


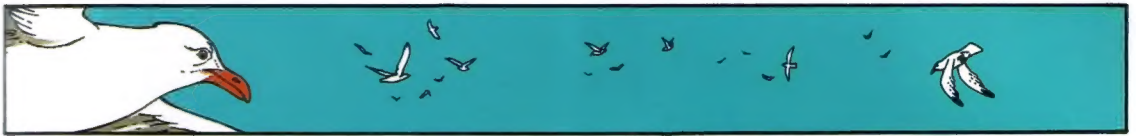
WILLIAM BLORE

Yes! That stinking piece  
of rock, teeming with gulls!  
I was a small boy when I last  
came here. This time, I've  
been invited with seven  
other people... Interesting,  
isn't it? Now, let's go!













I hope you have everything you need, Miss?



I'm fine, thank you. I'm Mrs Owen's new secretary. I expect you know that?



No, Miss, I don't know anything. I haven't seen Mrs Owen — not yet. We only came here two days ago.



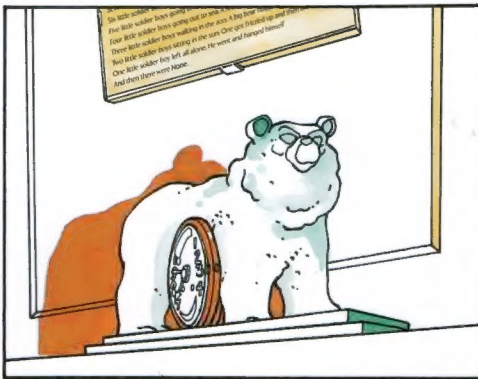
How many staff are there here?



Just me and my husband, Miss. If you want anything, just ring the bell...



What a strange woman...



One little soldier boy went out to dine; One choked his little self and then there were Nine.  
Nine little soldier boys sat up very late; One overslept himself and then there were Eight.  
Eight little soldier boys travelling in Devon; One said he'd stay there and then there were Seven.  
Seven little soldier boys chopping up sticks; One chopped himself in halves and then there were Six.  
Six little soldier boys playing with a hive; A bumble-bee stung one and then there were Five.  
Five little soldier boys going in for law; One got in chancery and then there were Four.  
Four little soldier boys going out to sea; A red herring swallowed one and then there were Three.  
Three little soldier boys walking in the zoo; A big bear hugged one and then there were Two.  
Two little soldier boys sitting in the sun; One got frizzled up and then there was One.  
One little soldier boy left all alone; He went and hanged himself...  
And then there were None.



Seven little soldier boys chopping up sticks; One chopped himself in halves and then there were Six.  
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Five little soldier boys going in for law; One got in chancery and then there were Four.  
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Ladies and gentlemen!  
Silence,  
please!



You are charged with the following crimes:  
Edward George Armstrong, on 14 March 1925 you caused the death of Louisa Mary Clees.

William Henry Blore, you brought about the death of James Stephen Landor on 10 October 1928.

Lieutenant Philip Lombard, in February 1932 you brought about the death of twenty-one men belonging to an African tribe.

Anthony James Marston, on 14 November last, you killed John and Lucy Coombes.

Lawrence John Wargrave, on 10 June 1930 you led Edward Seton to his death.

John Gordon MacArthur, on 4 January 1917 you deliberately sent your wife's lover, Arthur Richmond, to his death.

Thomas and Ethel Rogers, on 6 May 1929 you let Jennifer Brady die.

Vera Elizabeth Claythorne, on 11 August 1935 you killed Cyril Ogilvie Hamilton.

Emily Caroline Brent, on 5 November 1931 you were responsible for the death of Beatrice Taylor.

Prisoners at the bar, have you anything to say in your defence?







It's nothing. She's just fainted. She'll be OK.



Who was that speaking? Where was he?

What's going on here? What kind of tasteless joke was that?



That voice! It sounded as though it were in here with us. Unless...



Look! A gramophone!



It seems someone was just playing a practical joke!



Well, that remains to be seen...



How could anybody...? They were wicked, filthy lies...



Who put that record on the gramophone?

I did, sir. On the orders of Mr Owen. I thought it was just a piece of music. Had I known what it was...

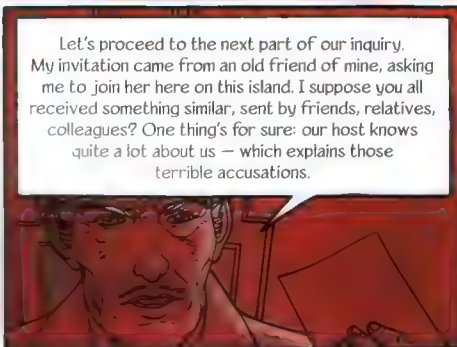
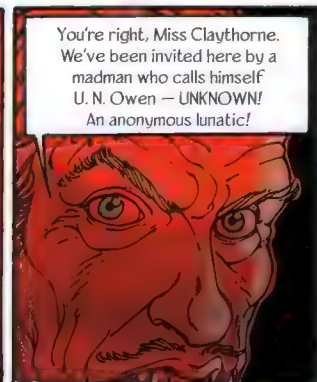
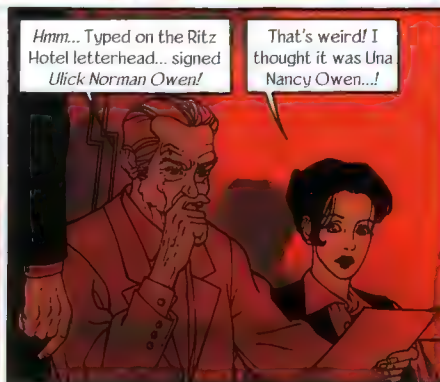
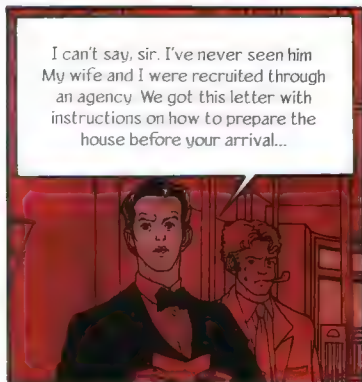
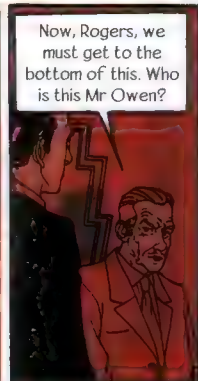
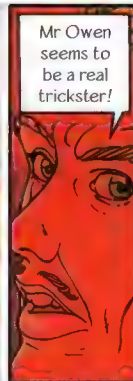
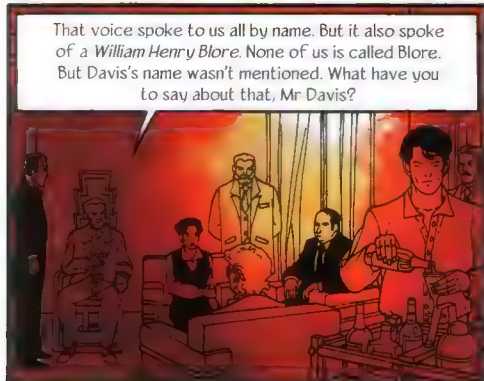


Is there a title on the record?



Ha! It says Swan Song!





I've been accused of sending Edward Seton to his death. At his trial, his lawyers had almost saved him, but I managed to convince the jury that he was a murderer, and Seton was duly sentenced to hang. I just did my duty, nothing more...



As for me, I was nursery governess to a child — Cyril Hamilton. He was forbidden to swim out far. But one day, when my attention was distracted, he slipped away. I swam after him but couldn't get there in time. He drowned. But it wasn't my fault. I was exonerated — even his mother didn't blame me. This accusation is so unfair!



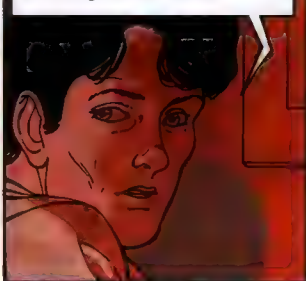
There's absolutely no truth in these accusations. Young Arthur Richmond was one of my officers. I had sent him on a reconnaissance mission, and he was killed in combat. It's a natural course of events in wartime. What I resent is the slur about my wife — his lover indeed!



About those natives — I'm afraid the story is true! We were lost in the bush. I took the food and cleared out. I had to! It was either them or me. I know it wasn't a very noble thing to do, but it was self-preservation. Yes, I left them to die.



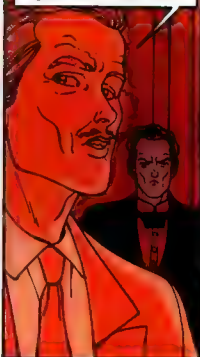
I've just been thinking — John and Lucy Coombes must be the kids I ran over near Cambridge. It was beastly bad luck! Cars nowadays are designed for speed, but English roads are hopeless. It was just an accident!



We were working for Miss Brady. One night she was seriously ill. There was a storm and the telephone was out of order, so I went on foot to get the doctor. But he was too late. We tried our best to save her.



And she left you a tidy sum of money in recognition of your services, eh?



I was the police officer in charge of a bank robbery case. Landor had killed the night watchman and my statement led to his conviction. He died in prison. I was only doing my duty!



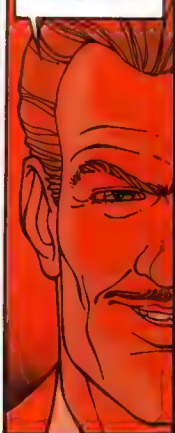
Mine is a mystery to me. I don't even remember anybody called Clees. Probably a patient who died. Not all surgery is successful, you know.



I've always followed my conscience. I've got nothing to blame myself for!



Amazing! Except for me, everybody seems to be a law-abiding citizen!



Our inquiry ends there. Now Rogers, who else is there on this island?

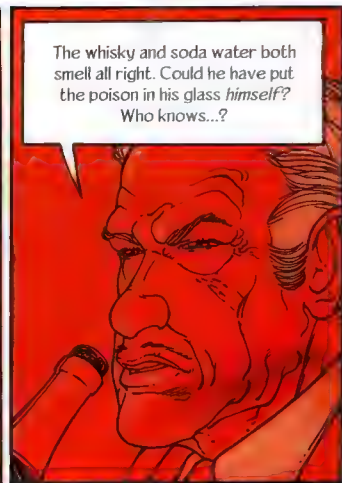
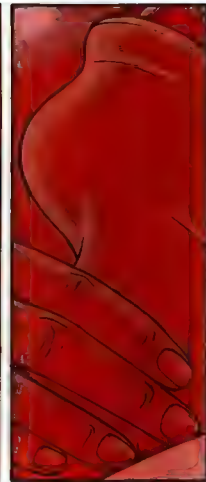
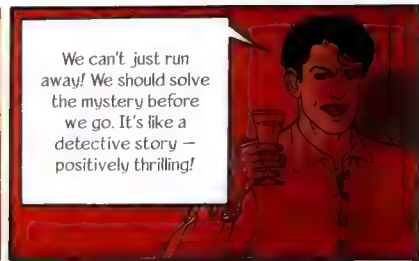
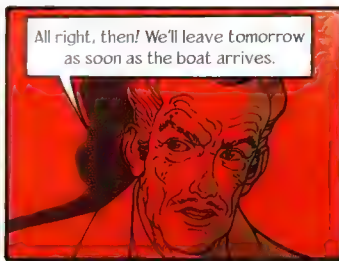
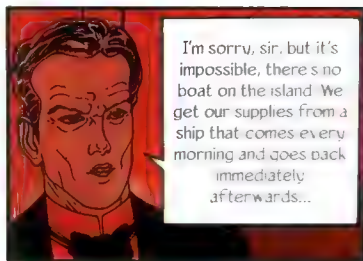
Nobody, sir. Nobody at all.



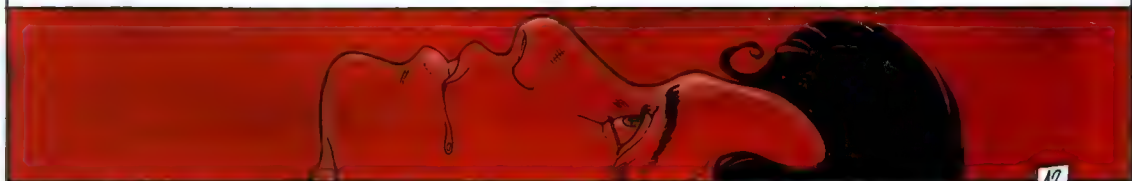
I don't know why our insane host has gathered us all here. But I suggest we leave this place as soon as possible!

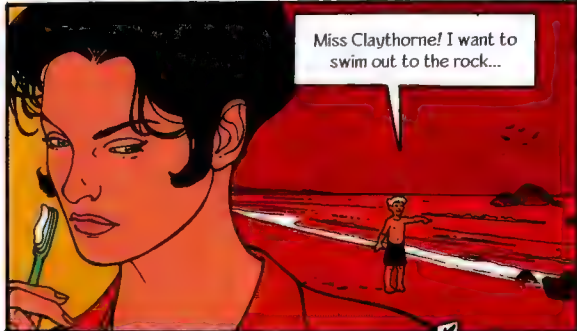
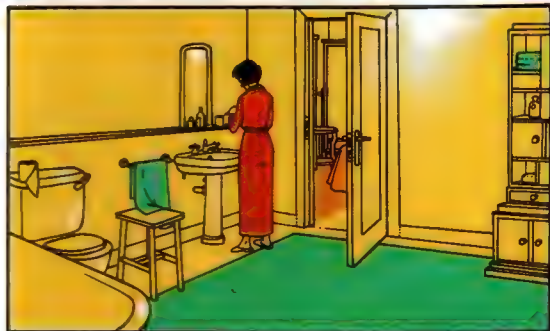
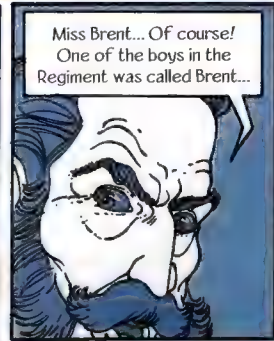
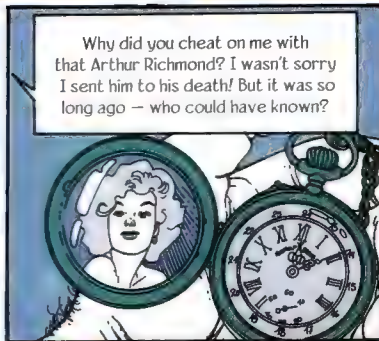
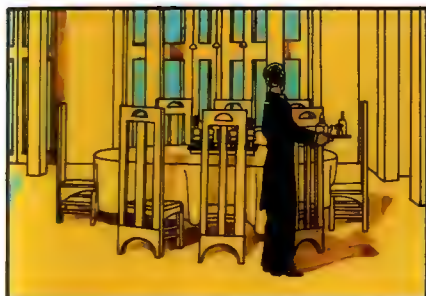
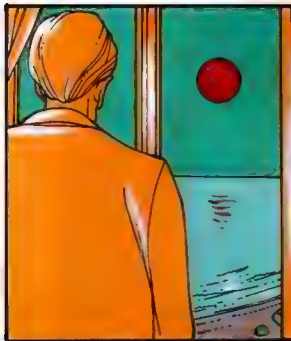




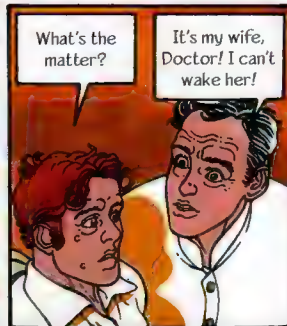
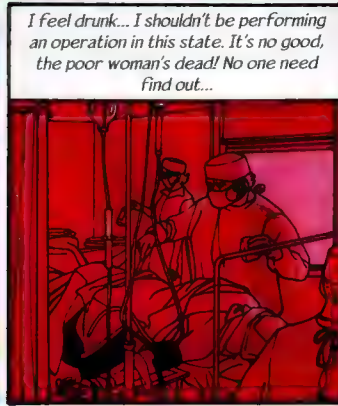
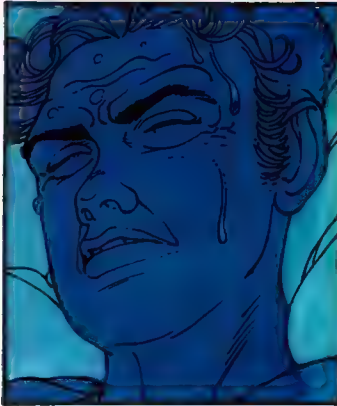
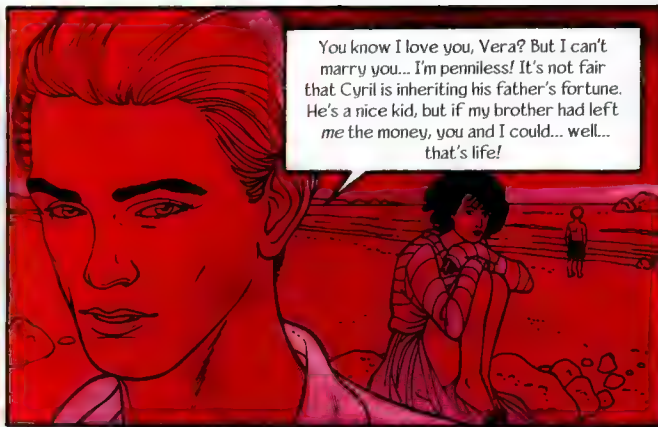


"Ten little soldier boys went out to dine: one choked his little self and then there were Nine."



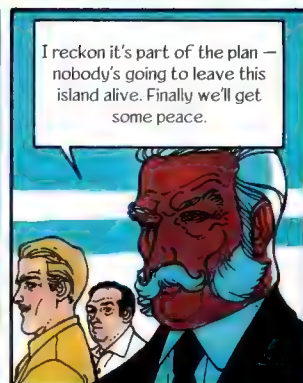
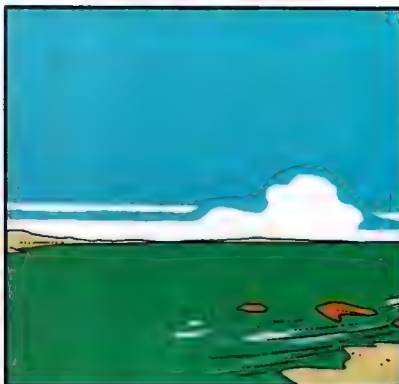
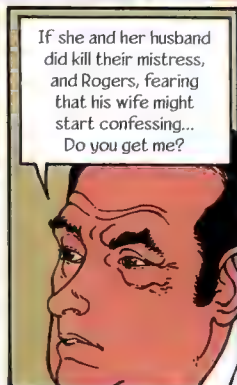
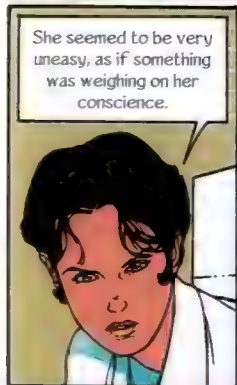




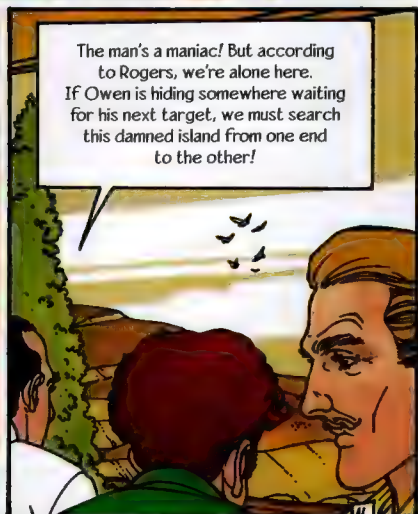
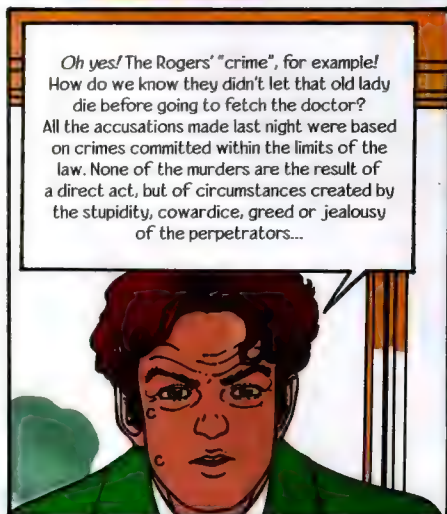
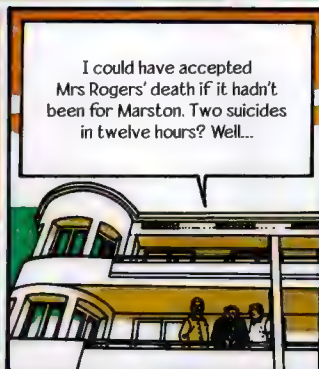
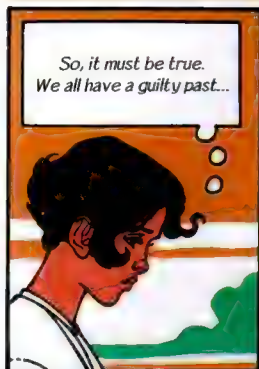
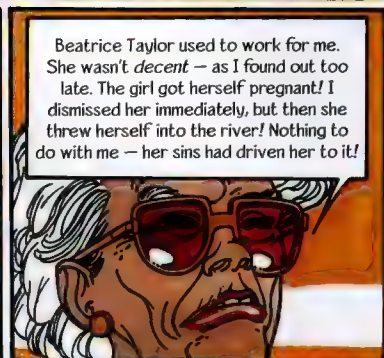
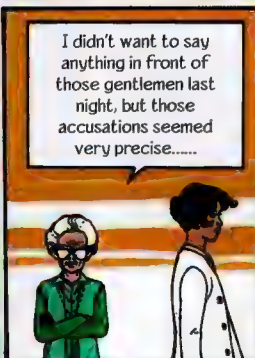


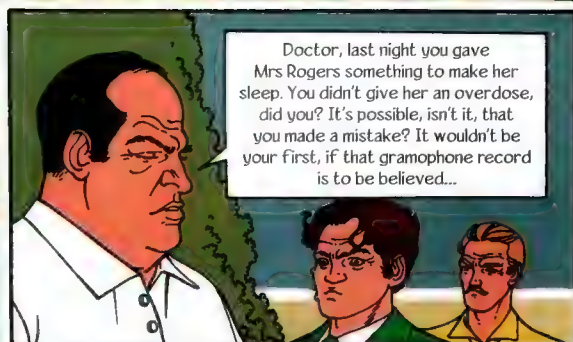
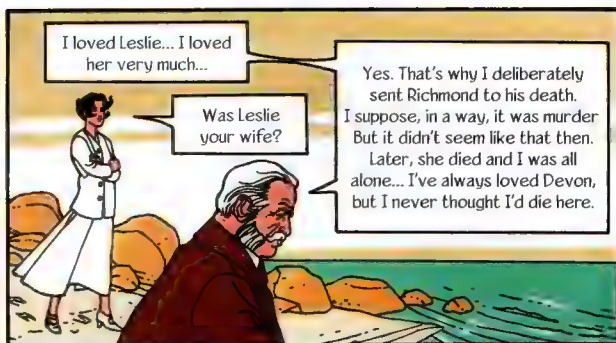
"Nine little soldier boys sat up very late: one overslept himself and then there were Eight."



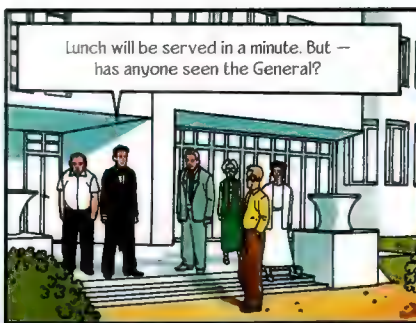










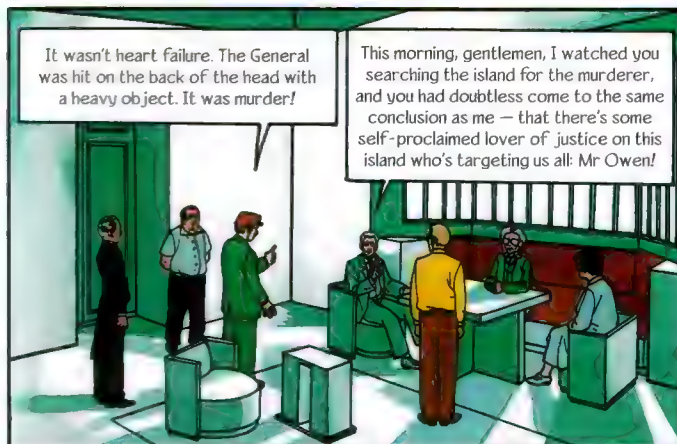


"Eight little soldier boys travelling in Devon; one said he'd stay there and then there were Seven."





Yes, Mr Rogers, see for yourself — there are only seven left!



It wasn't heart failure. The General was hit on the back of the head with a heavy object. It was murder!

This morning, gentlemen, I watched you searching the island for the murderer, and you had doubtless come to the same conclusion as me — that there's some self-proclaimed lover of justice on this island who's targeting us all: Mr Owen!



But Armstrong, Lombard and I searched the island from end to end... There's no one else here, I tell you. *Nobody!*

Then it's perfectly clear. Mr Owen is one of us!



Oh, no, no, no...



Of the ten people who came to this island yesterday, three are definitely cleared: the three victims.

It's unbelievable! But you must be right.



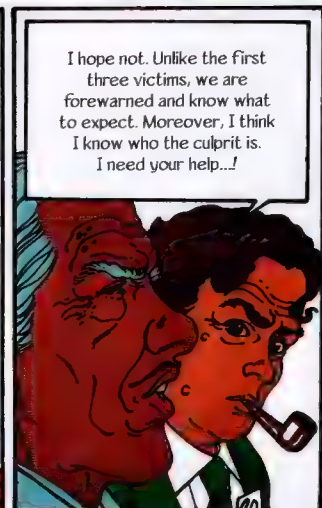
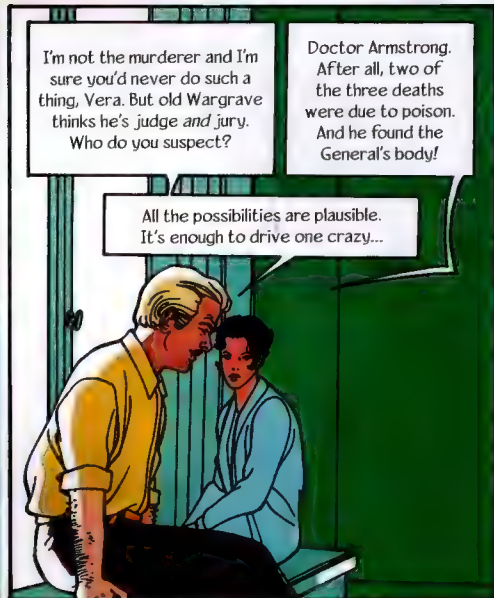
Lombard's got a revolver. He didn't tell the truth last night. He admits it...

I've explained that. Unfortunately, we're all in the same position. There is only our word to go upon. And I'm not the murderer!



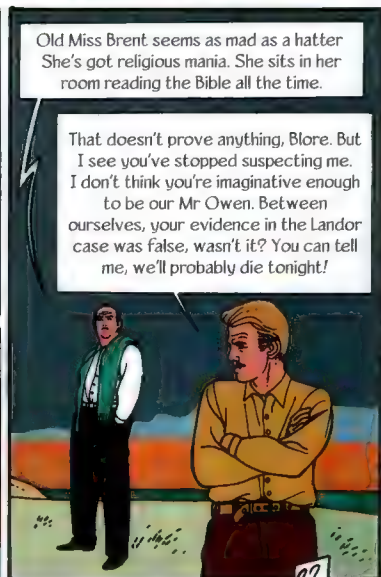
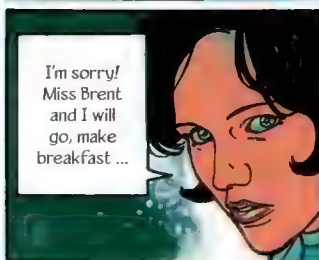
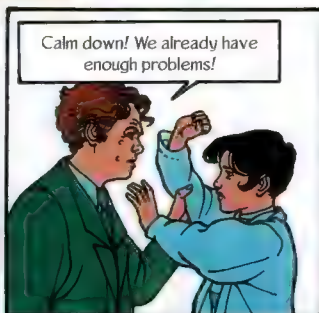
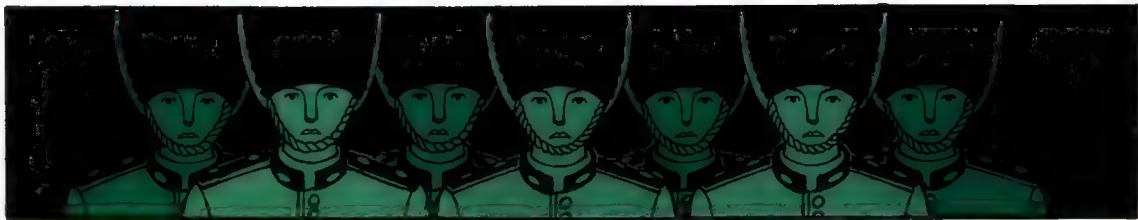
Me neither! I'm a reputed doctor and...

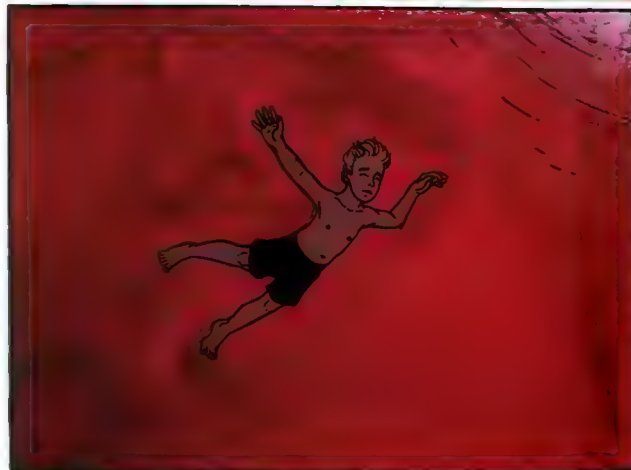
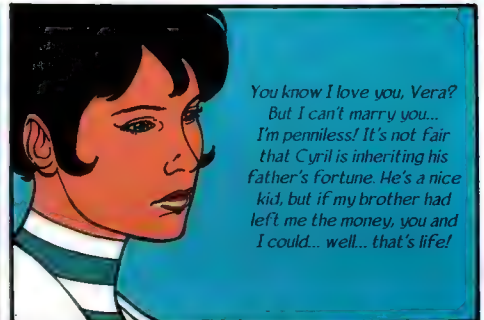
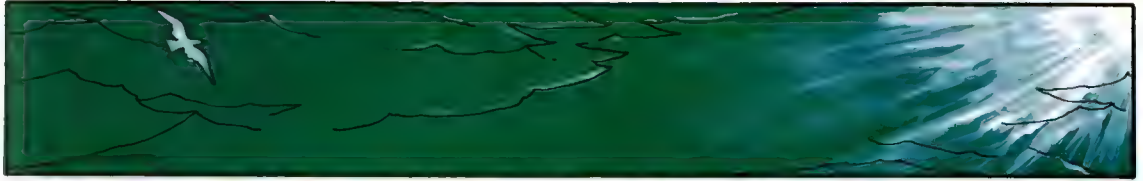
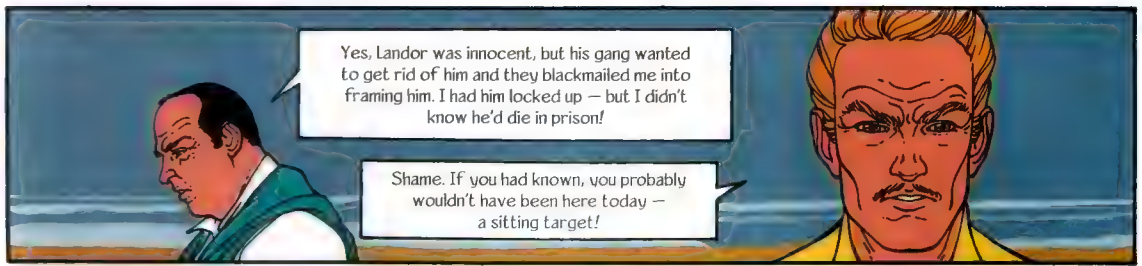




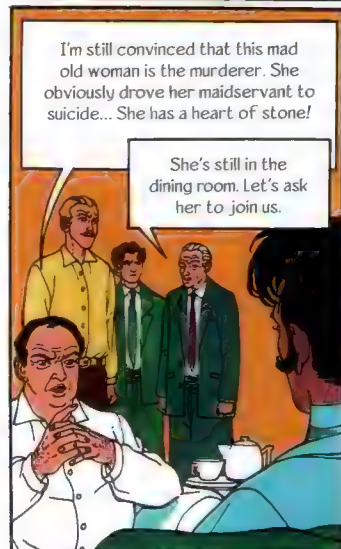
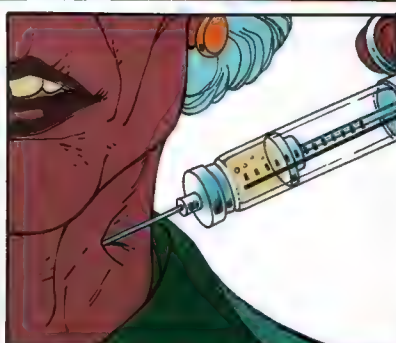
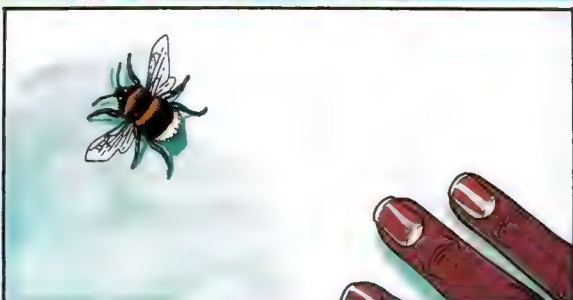
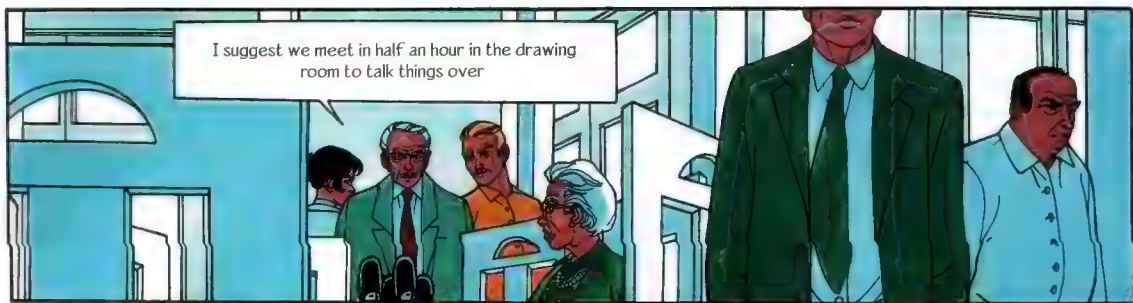


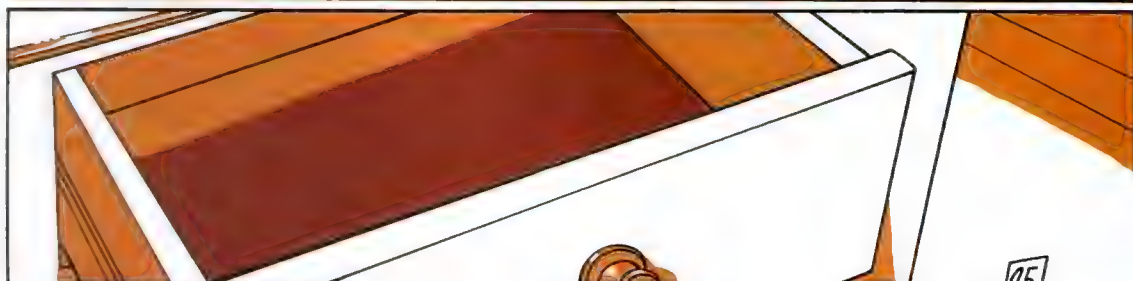
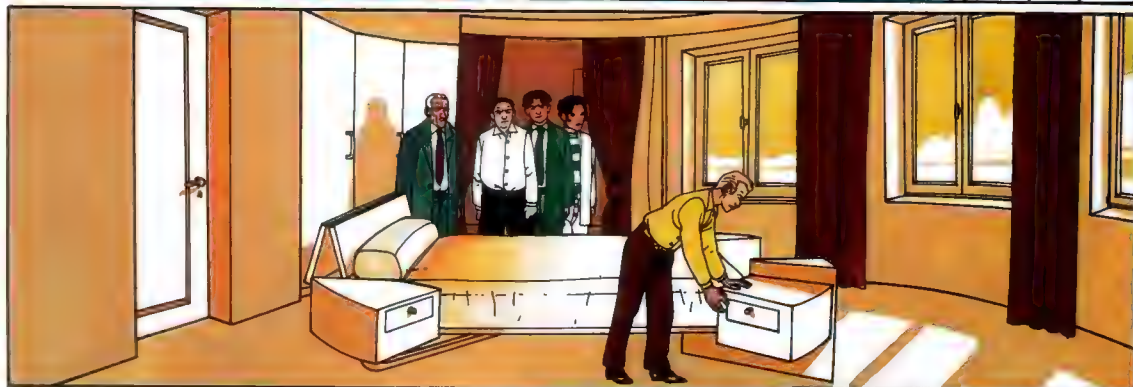
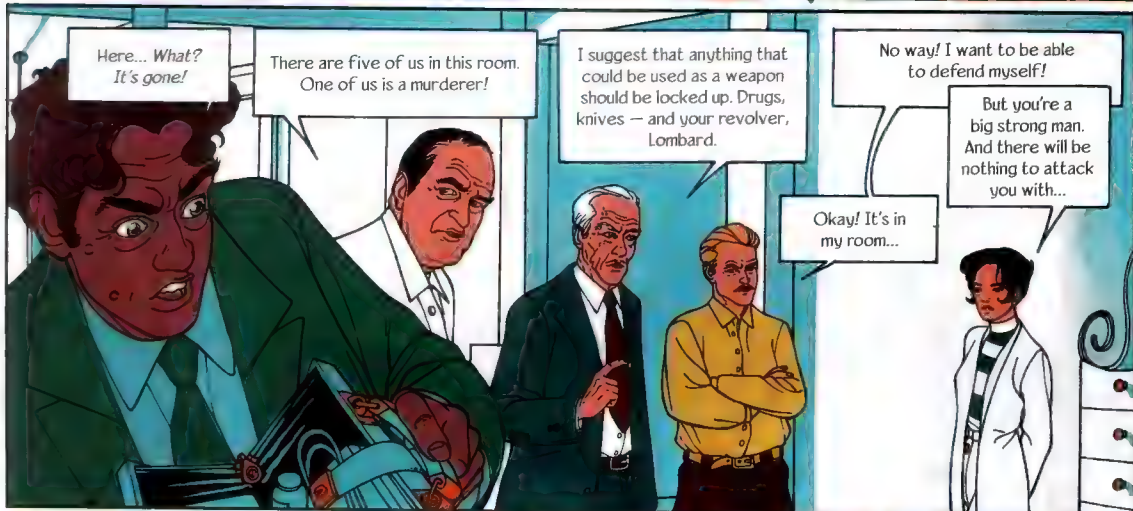
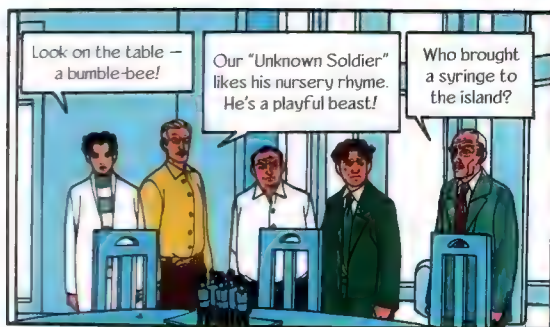




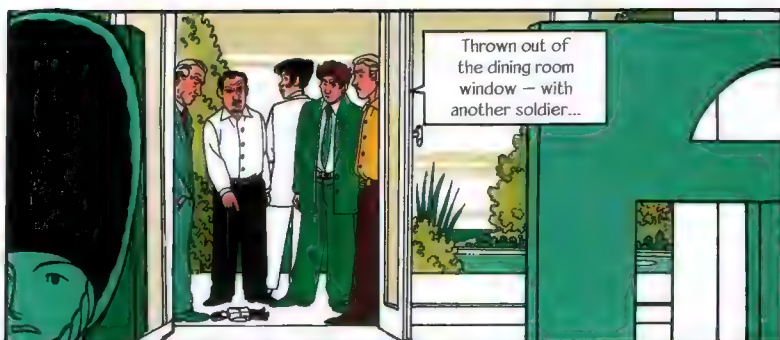
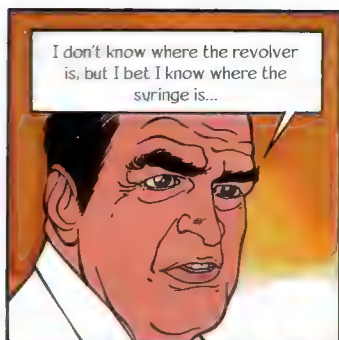


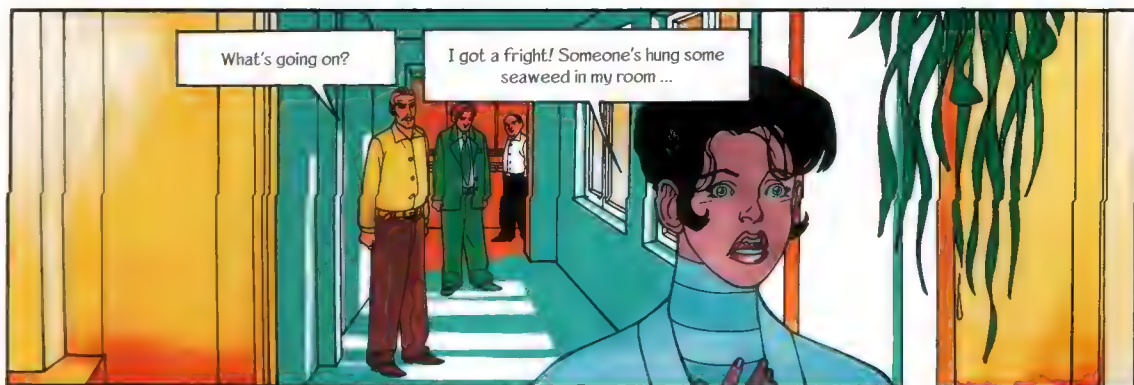




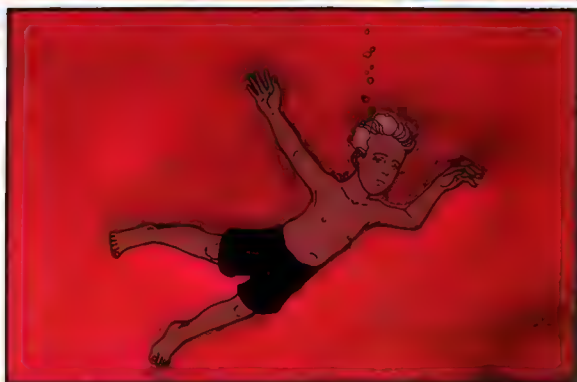


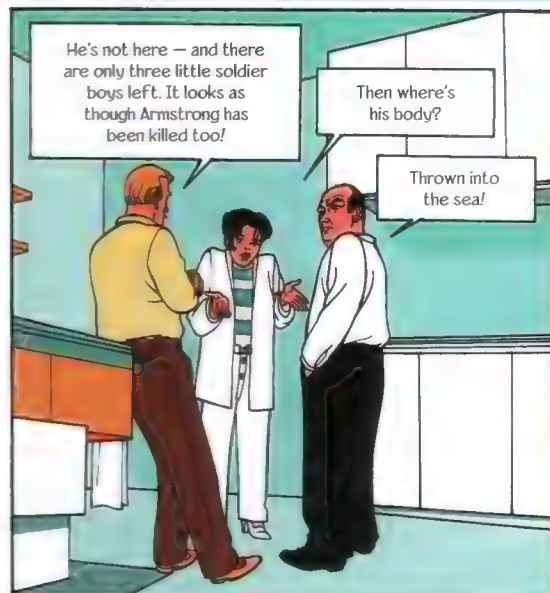
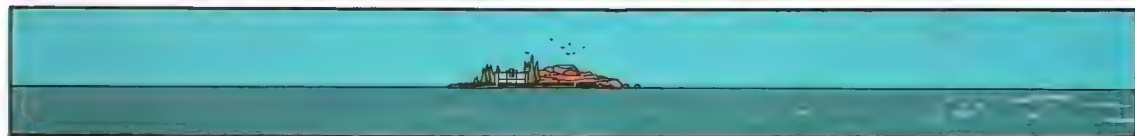
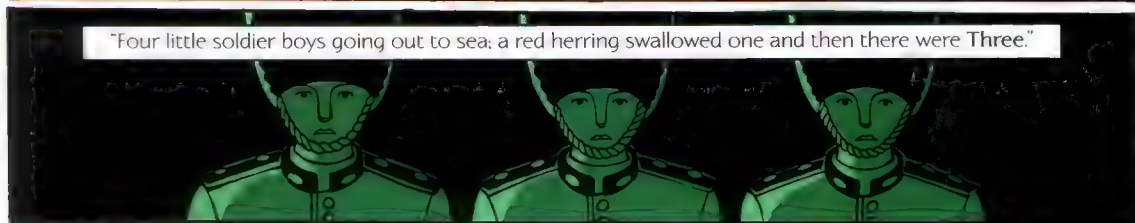




















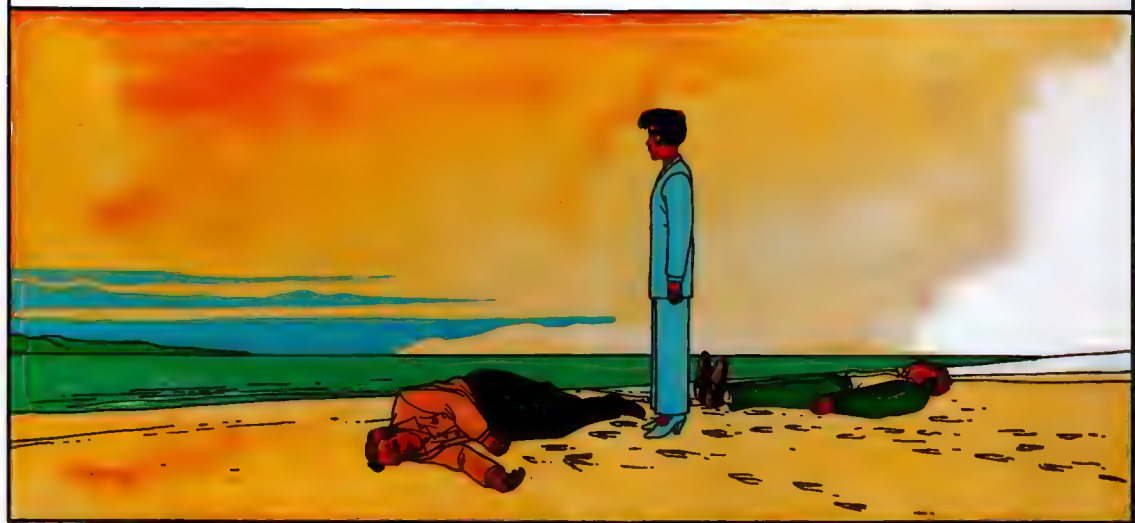








"Two little soldier boys sitting in the sun; one got frizzled up, and then there was **One**."



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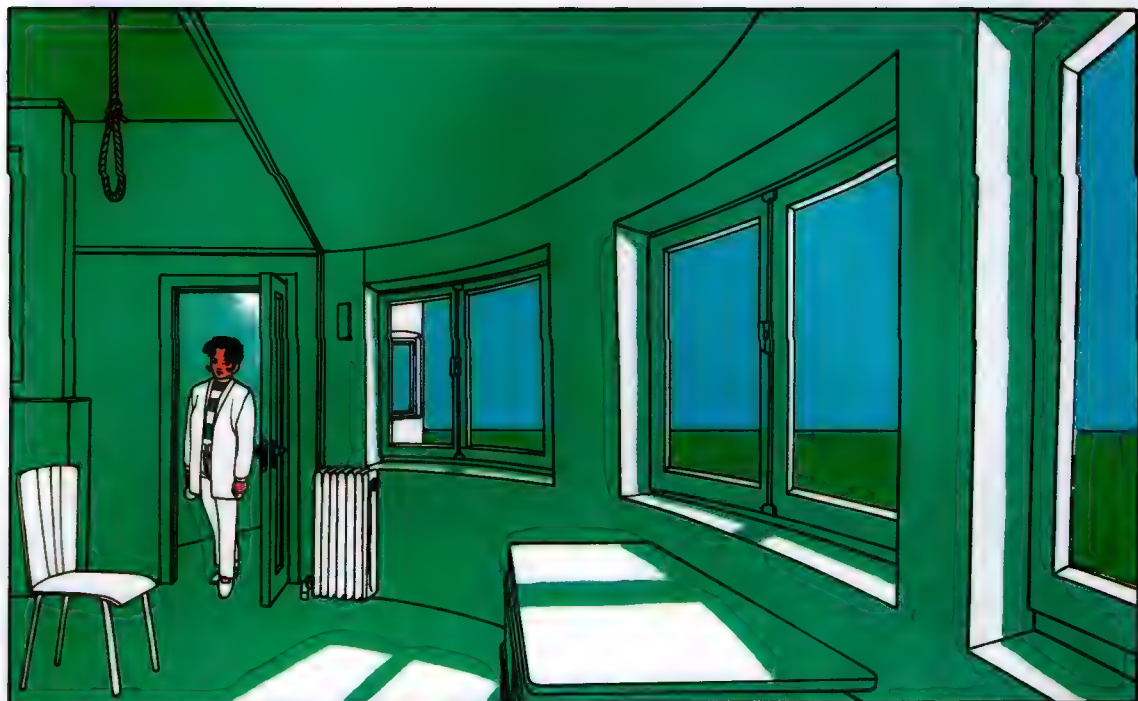


You're behind the times,  
my little friends.



You can come with me, little one. We've  
won, my dear. We've won — he didn't get us!  
"One little soldier boy left all alone..."  
And how did it end...? Oh yes! "He went  
and hanged himself... And then  
there were none!"





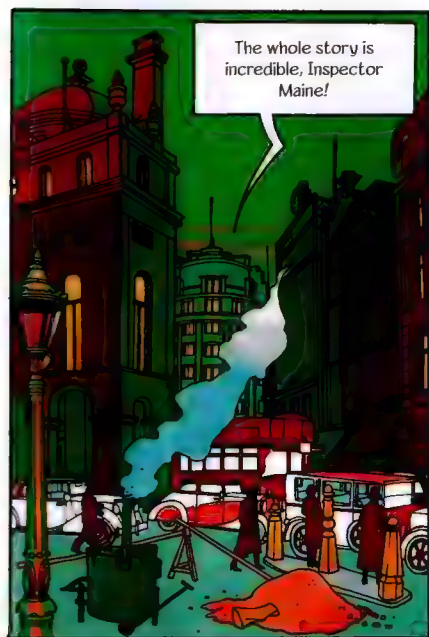


"One little soldier boy left all alone; he went and hanged himself... And then there were None."









The whole story is incredible, Inspector Maine!

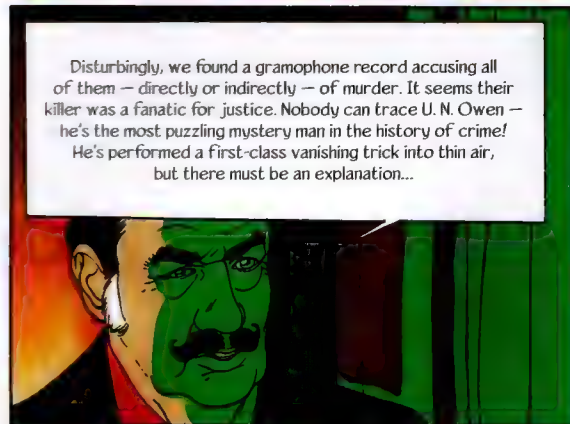


Ten people dead and not a living soul on the island... It doesn't make sense!

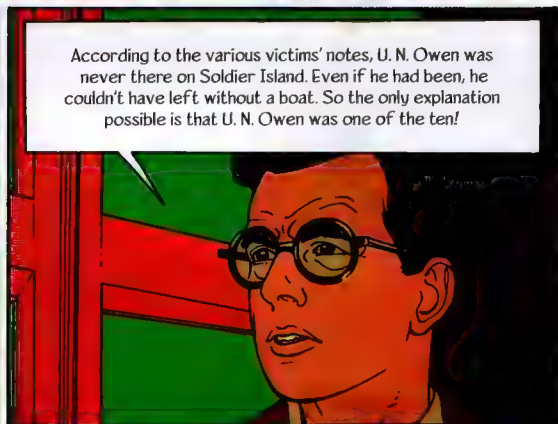
Nevertheless, it's happened, Sir Thomas!



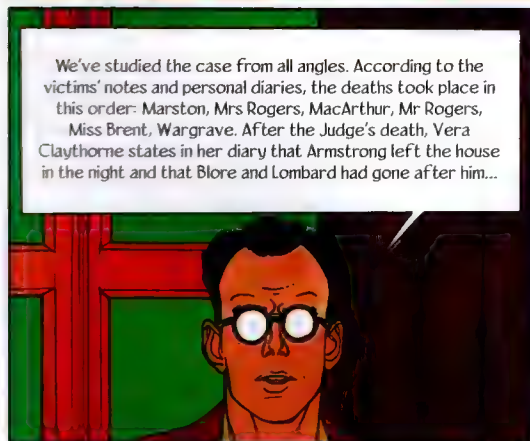
But somebody must have killed them. All of them died in a violent manner... poisonings, gunshots, fractured skulls, even a hanging...



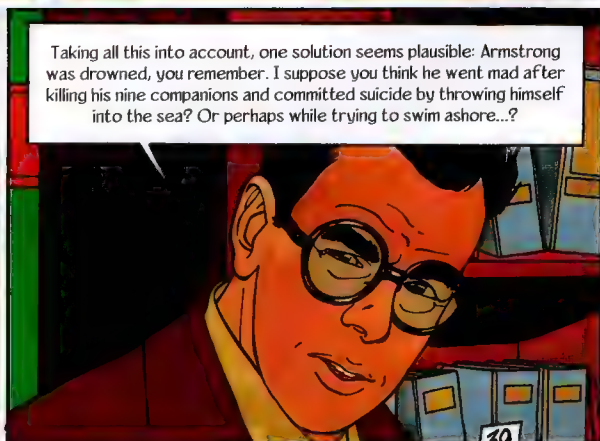
Disturbingly, we found a gramophone record accusing all of them — directly or indirectly — of murder. It seems their killer was a fanatic for justice. Nobody can trace U. N. Owen — he's the most puzzling mystery man in the history of crime! He's performed a first-class vanishing trick into thin air, but there must be an explanation...



According to the various victims' notes, U. N. Owen was never there on Soldier Island. Even if he had been, he couldn't have left without a boat. So the only explanation possible is that U. N. Owen was one of the ten!



We've studied the case from all angles. According to the victims' notes and personal diaries, the deaths took place in this order: Marston, Mrs Rogers, MacArthur, Mr Rogers, Miss Brent, Wargrave. After the Judge's death, Vera Claythorne states in her diary that Armstrong left the house in the night and that Blore and Lombard had gone after him...



Taking all this into account, one solution seems plausible: Armstrong was drowned, you remember. I suppose you think he went mad after killing his nine companions and committed suicide by throwing himself into the sea? Or perhaps while trying to swim ashore...?



But this solution fails on one ground. The forensic expert reached the island on the morning of 13th August. According to him, these people had been dead at least thirty-six hours and probably a good deal longer...

He reckoned Armstrong had been in the water for eight to ten hours, which means he'd drowned on the night of 10th or 11th August, because the rising tide had washed up his body on the 11th at around 11 o'clock. That was the highest tide after the storm.

Armstrong can't have killed the other three before throwing himself into the sea because his body had been dragged above the high water mark! It was laid out stretched on the ground — all neat and tidy. So someone was alive on the island after Armstrong was dead!

On the morning of the 11th, Armstrong "disappeared". Three people remained: Lombard, Blore and Vera Claythorne. Lombard was shot with a revolver. His body was down by the sea near Armstrong's. Vera was found hanging in her room and Blore was on the terrace, his head crushed by a marble clock, which supposedly fell on him from the window above.

Now, let's look at these cases separately. First Lombard. Let's suppose he pushed the clock on to Blore — then he doped Vera Claythorne and strung her up. Lastly, he went to the beach and shot himself with the revolver... But in that case, who took away the revolver from him? We found it on the landing outside Wargrave's room!

I can guess what you're going to say, sir. That Vera Claythorne shot Lombard, took the revolver back to the house, dropped the clock on to Blore and then hanged herself. We found marks of seaweed on one of the chairs in her room, similar to that on her shoes: which suggests that she stood on the chair to hang herself and kicked it away with her feet...

But the chair wasn't found kicked over. It was neatly put back against the wall by someone else after Vera's death! That leaves us with Blore. But if you tell me that after shooting Lombard and inducing Vera to hang herself he pulled down that marble clock on himself, I won't believe you. Men like Blore don't commit suicide that way.

Therefore, sir, there must've been someone else on the island. Someone who tidied up once his macabre job was over. But where was he all the time — and where did he go? The Sticklehaven people are certain that no one could have left the island before the rescue boat got there...

So who killed them?



Years later, the following handwritten document was found in the sea by the captain of the Emma Jane fishing trawler...

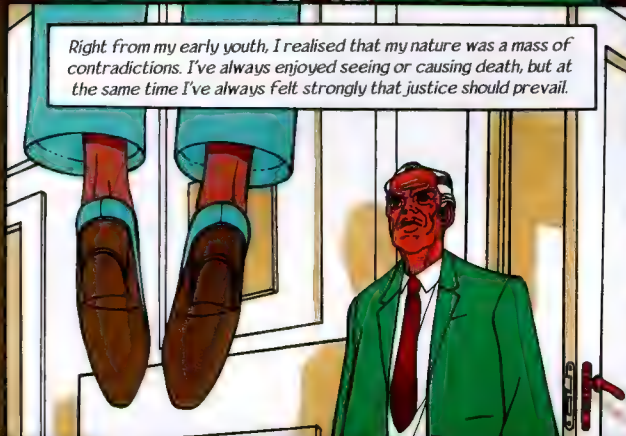




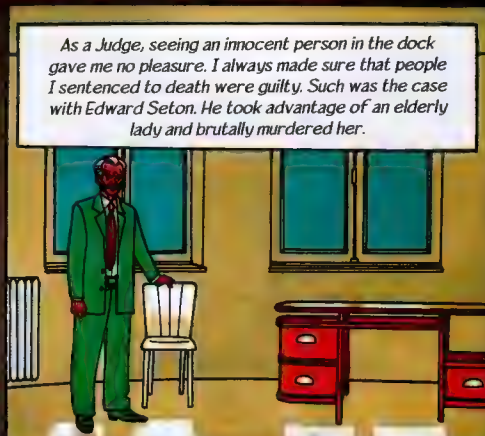
*I have always had an incurably romantic imagination. When reading adventure stories as a child, I was always thrilled by the idea of sealing important documents into a bottle and casting it into the sea to the mercy of the waves...*

*That is why I'm adopting this course, in the chance that one day my written confession will explain the unsolvable mystery of the ten murders on Soldier Island.*

*Right from my early youth, I realised that my nature was a mass of contradictions. I've always enjoyed seeing or causing death, but at the same time I've always felt strongly that justice should prevail.*

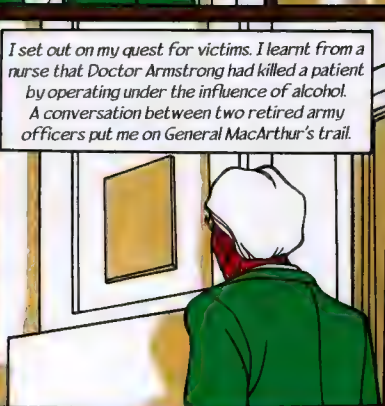


*As a Judge, seeing an innocent person in the dock gave me no pleasure. I always made sure that people I sentenced to death were guilty. Such was the case with Edward Seton. He took advantage of an elderly lady and brutally murdered her.*

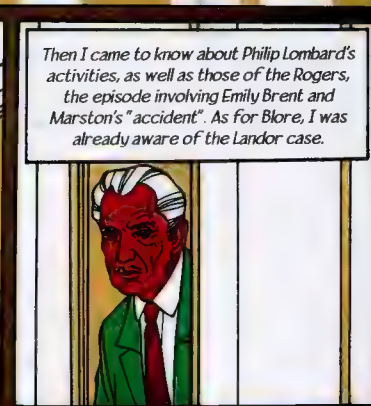


*It was then that I hatched my plan to kill those who had got away with murder. A nursery rhyme which had fascinated me as a boy came back into my mind — "Ten Little Soldier Boys".*

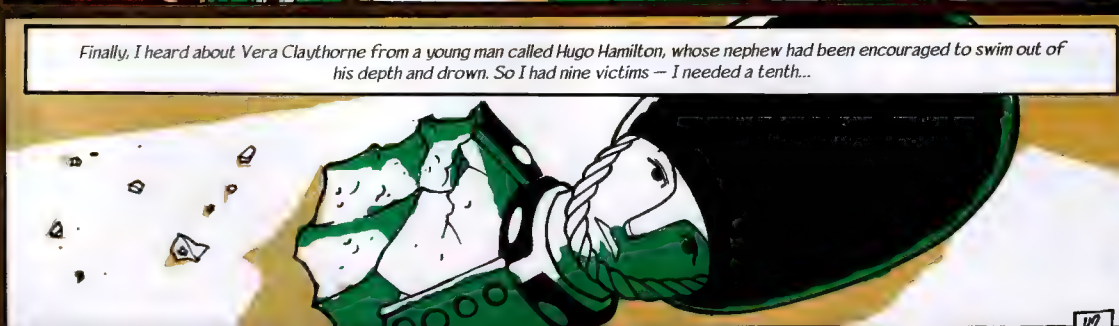
*I set out on my quest for victims. I learnt from a nurse that Doctor Armstrong had killed a patient by operating under the influence of alcohol. A conversation between two retired army officers put me on General MacArthur's trail.*



*Then I came to know about Philip Lombard's activities, as well as those of the Rogers, the episode involving Emily Brent and Marston's "accident". As for Blore, I was already aware of the Lardor case.*



*Finally, I heard about Vera Claythorne from a young man called Hugo Hamilton, whose nephew had been encouraged to swim out of his depth and drown. So I had nine victims — I needed a tenth...*



Then my Harley Street doctor diagnosed that I was unwell. Terminally. I immediately resolved not to submit to a slow and painful death but to go out in a blaze of excitement: I would be the tenth victim...! I was able to buy Soldier Island, and in the name of the fictitious Mr Owen I concocted suitable bait and meticulously planned the order of the deaths of my guests...

Marston and Mrs Rogers were first to die. Cyanide in Marston's glass and in the brandy that Rogers gave his wife. General MacArthur didn't hear me come up behind him and died painlessly. For my plan to work, I then needed an accomplice: Dr Armstrong...



I revealed my strategy to trap the murderer. Armstrong was completely taken in. On the morning of 10th August, I killed Rogers while chopping firewood. During the confusion that it caused, I pinched Lombard's revolver from his room. After breakfast, it was easy for me to give a shot of cyanide to Miss Brent. Bringing a bumble-bee into the room may have seemed childish, but I enjoyed sticking to my nursery rhyme...



I had safely hidden away the revolver and had used up all the cyanide. I suggested to Armstrong that we should simulate my death, which I said would enable us to trap the murderer, and he liked the idea. A bit of red mud plastered on my forehead, the red curtain, my old wig and some low lighting were all we needed. Everything worked out beautifully...



Doctor Armstrong played his role to perfection. I was carried to my room, after which everyone just forgot about me. It gave me the chance to put the revolver back in Lombard's room before they went to bed. I had agreed to meet Armstrong at the edge of the cliff at two in the morning. I gave him a quick push, and he lost his balance...





Then came the moment I'd been waiting for — three frightened people left on the island... I watched them from the windows of the house...



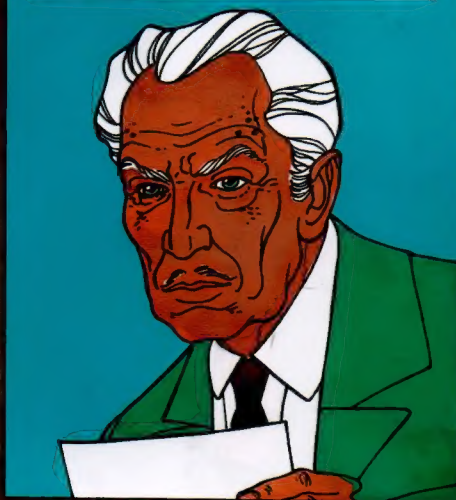
When I saw Blore coming alone, I dropped the clock on him from the window sill. Then I saw Vera shoot Lombard. Immediately after that, I arranged the noose in Vera's room and waited for the results of my psychological experiment...



The tension, the guilt, the hypnotic power of the setting — would they be enough to drive her to suicide...? I was right!



And now for the last stage. Once I finish writing my story, I shall put these pages in a sealed bottle and throw it into the sea. Why? It was my ambition to invent a murder mystery that no one could solve. But no artist can be satisfied with art alone. Every artist thirsts for recognition...



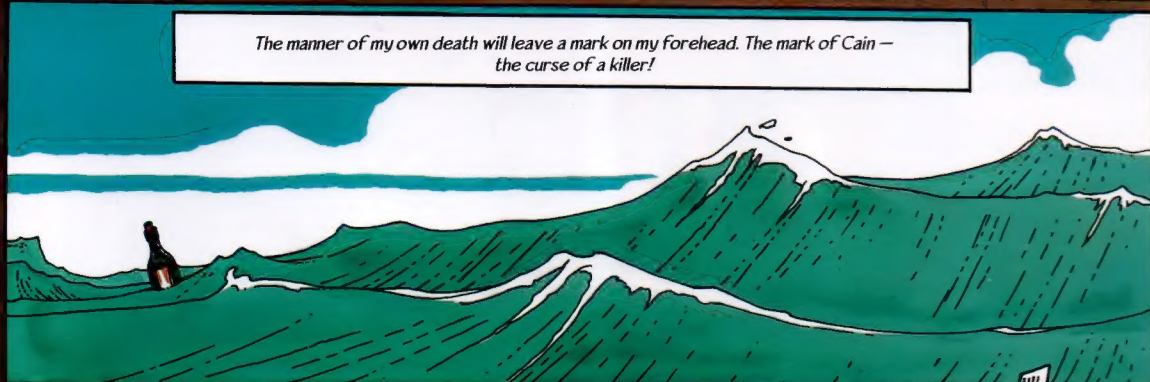
Even while writing this confession, I hope that the mystery of Soldier Island remains unsolved. But the police know that Edward Seton was guilty and may therefore figure it out...



If one of the ten people on the island was not a murderer in any sense of the word, then this innocent person must logically be the murderer who craved justice.



The manner of my own death will leave a mark on my forehead. The mark of Cain — the curse of a killer!

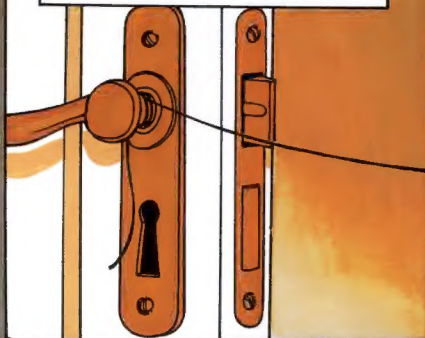




*I have little else to say. After enclosing my message in the bottle and consigning it to the waves, I shall go up and lie down on my bed.*



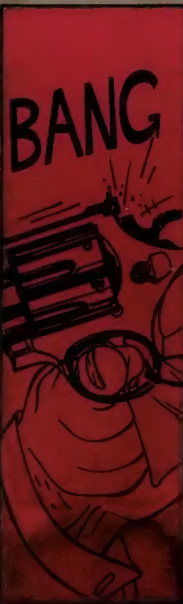
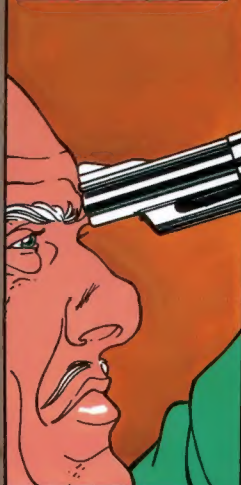
*I shall wind the black elastic cord from my reading glasses around the door handle...*



*...and loosely tie the other end to the revolver, which I shall hold in a handkerchief.*



*After pulling the trigger, my hand will fall to my side...*

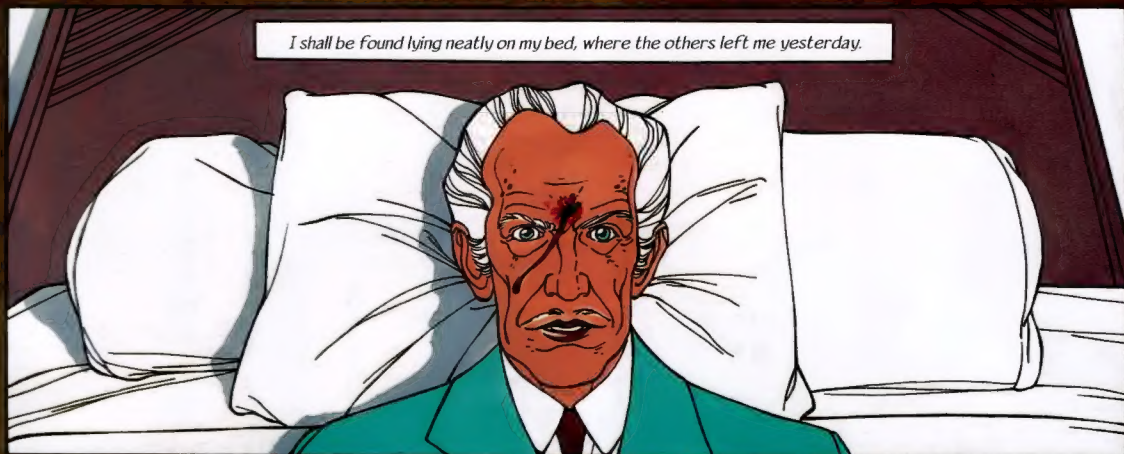


*...and the revolver will be pulled away by the elastic on to the floor by the door.*





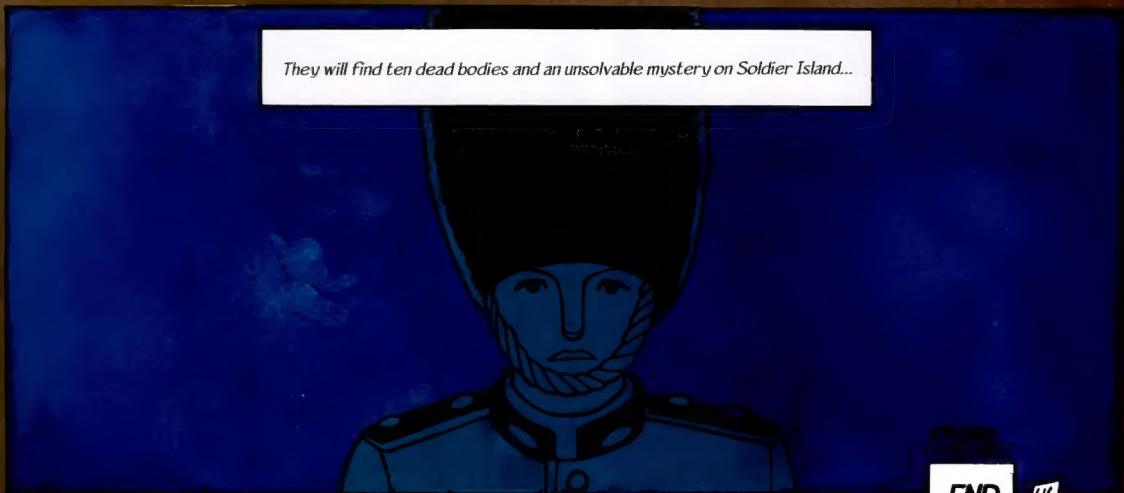
*I shall be found lying neatly on my bed, where the others left me yesterday.*



*By the time we are found, no one will be able to tell who died last.*



*They will find ten dead bodies and an unsolvable mystery on Soldier Island...*



END

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